

Baptists aiding earthquake survivors

NASHVILLE, Tn. (BP) — Contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) for November were \$14,916,108, 6.1%, or \$970,535, below the \$15,886,643 given the previous month, and 1.3% or \$189,026, above the \$14,727,082 received in November 2004, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are 3.7% below the same time frame in 2004. As of Nov. 30, 2005, the year-to-date total of \$30,802,751 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$1,187,504 under the \$31,990,255 received at the same point in 2004. Designated giving of \$6,918,758 for the same year-to-date period is 10.7%, or \$668,186, above gifts of \$6,250,572.25 received at this point last year. The \$3,366,510 in designated gifts received last month is \$317,375 above the \$3,049,135 received in November 2004, an increase of 10.4%. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$30,802,751 is 97.3% of the \$31,644,209 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America.



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My Child,

You may not know me, but I know every-
thing about you
Psalm 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you
rise up
Psalm 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways
Psalm 139:3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered
Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image
Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being
Acts 17:28

For you are my offspring
Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived
Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation
Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are
written in my book
Psalm 139:15-16

I determined the exact time of your birth
and where you would live
Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made
Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb
Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you
were born
Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who
don't know me
John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the
complete expression of love
1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you
1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am
your Father
1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father
ever could
Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect father
Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from
my hand
James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all
your needs
Matthew 6:31-33

My plan for your future has always been
filled with hope
Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love
Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the
sand on the seashore
Psalms 139:17-18

And I rejoice over you with singing
Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you
Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession
Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart
and all my soul
Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous
things
Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will
find me
Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires
of your heart
Psalm 37:4

For it is I who gave you those desires
Philippians 2:13

I am able to do more for you than you could
possibly imagine
Ephesians 3:20

For I am your greatest encourager
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all
your troubles
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you
Psalm 34:18

As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried
you close to my heart
Isaiah 40:11

One day I will wipe away every tear from
your eyes
Revelation 21:3-4

And I'll take away all the pain you have suf-
fered on this earth
Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I
love my son, Jesus
John 17:23

For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed
John 17:26

He is the exact representation of my being
Hebrews 1:3

He came to demonstrate that I am for you,
not against you
Romans 8:31

And to tell you that I am not counting
your sins
2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled
2 Corinthians 5:18-19

His death was the ultimate expression of my
love for you
1 John 4:10

I gave up everything I loved that I might
gain your love
Romans 8:31-32

If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you
receive me
1 John 2:23

And nothing will ever separate you from my
love again
Romans 8:38-39

Come home and I'll throw the biggest party
heaven has ever seen
Luke 15:7

I have always been Father, and will always be
Father
Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is... Will you be my child?
John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you
Luke 15:11-32

Love,
**Your Dad,
Almighty God**

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the staff of The Baptist Record.

Workers pour hearts into India missions

Editor's note: Some names in this article have been changed for security reasons.

As the youngest high school football coach in South Carolina Division 4-A history, 24-year-old Carter Bolin relished the challenge of motivating his team before games against bigger, better opponents.

"I'd point across the field and tell my players, 'Look at those guys. Every one of them has 20 pounds on every one of you. It's gonna be fun to smack 'em,'" Carter says. "Eventually my guys would start yelling, 'Yeah! Yeah! Lemme at 'em!' They might bounce off the bigger guys a few times, but they'd eventually wear 'em down."

Carter took his undersized, overachieving team to the state semifinals for the first time since 1950 — thrilling the whole town. "I could've run for mayor after that," he claims with a grin.

Instead, he joined the ministry staff of his church, East Cooper Church, next door to the Charleston-area high school where he coached. He spent the next 18 years helping mobilize the growing congregation — especially its young people — to follow Christ into the world. Local outreach spurred international involvement. About 30 East Cooper members have become missionaries after participating in short-term church mission trips.

On the flight home from a two-week mission trip to India, it was Carter's turn to be mobilized — by his wife, Vienna.

"It was miserable, it was hot, it was all the things India can be," he recalls. "But the people just broke our hearts. There was a spiritual void, and they were filling it with idols."

"When we got on the plane, Vienna looked at me and said, 'I could never serve in India.' By



THAT ALL MAY KNOW — Carter Bolin (left) discusses Islam and the Christian gospel with Muslims near a mosque in Calcutta (Kolkata), India, West Bengal's capital. One in four Bengalis is a Muslim. As a missionary strategy coordinator, Bolin aims to train Bengali church planters to reach all 27 million of them with the good news of Christ. (IMB photo)

the time we touched down in the States, she was in tears. She said, 'I realized that I trust God with my kids in a safe place like our home, but I don't trust Him enough to take them to India. We're just paying lip service.'

"So we ended up mobilizing ourselves and our kids to India. We just felt, 'If not us, who? If not now, when?' It was time for me to put up or shut up, because this is what I'd been preaching."

That was five years ago. Today, as a Southern Baptist missionary strategy coordinator, Carter faces a bigger challenge than he ever encountered as a coach.

The challenge lies in the Indian state of West Bengal, where William Carey launched the modern missionary move-

ment more than two centuries ago. Today it is home to at least 80 million people. The majority are Hindus — the primary focus of Christian missions among Bengalis since Carey's day. But one in four Bengalis proclaims Islam. Muslims comprise a quarter of the 16 million people of Calcutta (Kolkata), West Bengal's sprawling capital.

As in much of the rest of India, however, the real numbers can be found in the villages. In West Bengal and neighboring areas of India, Bengali-speaking Muslims predominate in about 30,000 villages.

Carter's vision and goal as a strategy coordinator is to see Jesus Christ glorified through a church-planting movement among the 27 million Muslims of West Bengal and nearby areas. How? By planting a jaamat — or house church — in every one of those villages.

It's a vision that fits both parts of William Carey's famous motto: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

It's doable. In fact, it's already beginning to happen. More than 100 jaamats — with about 1,000

former Muslims who have become baptized followers of Isa Masih (Jesus Christ) — have sprouted across West Bengal during the past two years.

That represents only a typical month's spiritual harvest across the border in Bangladesh (once part of Bengal), where several powerful church-planting movements among Muslims now count more than half a million believers, but momentum is gathering.

"We feel like we're on the end of the runway getting ready for takeoff," Carter reports. "Things are starting to happen."

"We want to build this into the DNA, into the very fabric and backbone of every jaamat. Now that you've heard the good news and received it, you must share it with neighboring villages," he explains.

THE BAPTIST Record

Missions fast facts

Field Personnel under appointment (9/13/05): 5,077
Career/associates/apprentices: 4,098
2-yr. ISC/Journeymen/Masters: 1,140
Field Personnel appointed 2004: 735
Volunteers 2004: 30,377
Overseas baptisms 2004: 607,132
Overseas churches 2004: 99,495
Overseas church membership 2004: 7.4 million
New churches 2004: 21,028
People groups engaged: 1,194
People groups of the Last Frontier: 4,992
Population of the Last Frontier peoples: 1.6 billion
World Population 2004: 6.4 billion
LMCO receipts for Christmas 2004: \$133.9 million
LMCO goal for Christmas 2005: \$150 million
IMB budget for 2005: \$283.1 million

Source: International Mission Board

For 24-hour international missions prayer requests, call PrayerLine (800) 395-PRAY (7729). For ways to serve in international missions, call Initial Contacts Coordinator at (888) 422-6461 or send e-mail to initial.contacts@imb.org. To obtain general IMB information, assistance and resources to help your church get involved, call us at (800) 999-3113 or go to our Web site at <http://imb.org>. For downloadable videos, go to <http://ime.imb.org/resources/download/videos.asp>.

Looking back

10 years ago

Garland McKee, director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, retires after serving in that position since January, 1991.

20 years ago

Expressing concern over statistics projecting a decline in baptisms in 1985, a dozen state Baptist evangelism directors blamed continuing controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention as one of the major reasons for the decline.

50 years ago

An ad in The Baptist Record states, "Are all cold remedies alike? No! 666 is the wide activity medicine, which combines four of the most effective, widely prescribed drugs known, to relieve all cold miseries sooner."



**That all peoples
may know Him**

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for International
Missions**

**National Goal:
\$135,000,000**

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WCC student killed in Coast auto crash

William Carey College (WCC) sophomore Sara Jane Holifield of Moss Point was killed in a traffic accident December 9 on Highway 90 between Gautier and Ocean Springs, according to a spokesperson for the Baptist-affiliated school in Hattiesburg. The crash also left her mother, Frances Holifield, in critical condition.

Preliminary reports indicate that the Holifields were rear-ended while stopped at a traffic signal and were pushed into an unoccupied truck owned by a waste hauler. It was not clear which of the women was driving.

Funeral services for Sara Jane Holifield were conducted on December 15 at Heritage Funeral Home in Moss Point.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

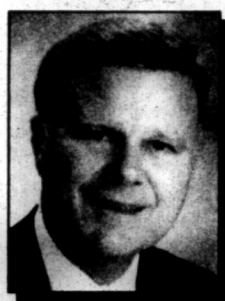
"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

HOW TO FIX 2006

Right up front I need to tell you I don't have any easy or quick solution to fix everything in your upcoming 2006 year. One of the struggles we deal with in our American culture is that we want everything totally fixed, and we want it fixed right now. Occasionally, something happens in our life that helps us settle back down to reality and helps us realize that everything cannot be fixed — not now and sometimes not ever. If you live long enough, you will probably discover that there are some things you cannot fix even if you want to, some things you cannot fix even when you know how, and some things you cannot fix even when you want to, know how, and have all of the resources. It just can't be put back together. Still, I want to take a stab at some areas that if implemented in your New Year will help fix some things and can become experiences of blessings for the New Year.

The first thing I would challenge you to do is to read the Bible through in the New Year. I have found so many blessings that have come to my own life and my walk with the Lord out of commitment to read the Bible through in a year's time. While I have done this numerous times, it is amazing how many times I come across something that just seems to leap off the page, and it seems as though I have never seen it before. This is God's book. It is God breathed, God blessed, and if you will read it and heed it you will find that all through the year there will be special insights, unusual moments, and heaven provided opportunities that will come to your heart through reading the Word of



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

God. You can follow a plan that may be in your Bible, or at any LifeWay Bookstore you can pick up a copy of the Bible that is called *Everyday with Jesus*. It has 365 sections that allow you to read some of the Old, some of the New, and then a devotional.

The second thing I would encourage you to do in the New Year is to weed. I am not a big flower person. I guess you might say I am more of a tree guy than I am a flower person, but occasionally my wife wants me to help weed the flowerbeds. Maybe that is the reason I am not as crazy about flowers as some folks are because that is not in any way, shape, or form a fun job. In all reality it may be said that in our lives the weeding process is not fun either. How so? Well, if weeding means to get rid of something in our life that should not be there, then a close look at the flowerbeds in our hearts could reveal some things growing there that need to be weeded out. Maybe it is some act or attitude that you are fully aware that does not honor the Lord, bless others, or even do you any good, but you keep on carrying it around. Get rid of it! Talk to the Lord about it; ask Him to forgive you, and to give you the empowerment from heaven to overcome it. I would encourage you not to go looking at everyone else's

flowerbed. James says in his book in chapter five, verse nine, "Do not complain about each other." Just check around in your own flowerbed and see if there is something you need to weed. For some people the best thing that could possibly happen would be to leave some things behind in 2005 and not drag them into the New Year.

The third thing that I would suggest that you could do is plead. I mean by that to talk to God. Pray seriously, sincerely, and significantly. James 5:17 tells us that Elijah was a person just like us. He prayed and things happened. You can do that. Together we can do that. So I am going to ask you to plead. Talk to God about your family. Talk to Him about your church. Ask God to bless your pastor. Talk to Him about emerging countries around the world where missionaries are on the frontline of evangelistic outreach. Plead with God and watch things happen.

One final and glorious thing that will help fix 2006 is to lead. I am not talking about just leading as though you were the general in the army. I want to encourage you to commit in your heart to lead somebody to Jesus. Permit me to put it two ways. What a glorious thing it is to lead somebody to Jesus and what an equally glorious thing it is to lead Jesus to

somebody. You be the connector. You be the person God can use through your love, witness, and encouragement to see somebody born into His family, baptized, and blossom in their walk with Him. You lead somebody to the Lord.

I know that these things will not fix all of the problems in the world, but I guarantee you from the authority of God's Word if all God's people will walk with Him, stay with Him, hear from Him, and share Him with others we will see glorious, God honoring, and redemptive changes made around us.

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may know Him**

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals like to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful service. This feature is, hopefully, designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

Dec. 5-11

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

What's So Special About Jesus?

Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-2, 11

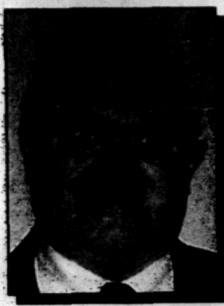
By Don Hicks

Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus is packed full of meaningful historical details. In the NIV our focal passage starts off matter-of-factly, stating, "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about." With this simple lead-in Matthew proceeds to tell the most profound, unique, and unusual facts surrounding Jesus' birth.

Perhaps the factual circumstance hardest for most non-Christians and some Christians to accept is the fact of the virgin birth. Anyone reading the New Testament account written by Matthew will have to agree that Matthew meant to be plainly stating his conviction that Jesus was born of a virgin without a human father or sexual union.

When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant he knew he wasn't the father because he and Mary had not violated the 7th commandment (Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.") Joseph could only assume that Mary had been intimate with some other man, maybe violently against her will. Joseph knew there was no other way for a woman to become pregnant.

Joseph apparently loved Mary very much because even though he was deeply hurt by her pregnancy he was going to do his best to avoid embarrassing her. Matthew's account also shows clearly Joseph's profound spiritual discernment and understanding when he fully accepts God's message delivered by the angel in a dream.



Hicks

live in his home they did not come together as husband and wife until after the birth of Jesus.

This special birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." This prophecy in profound not only because it was able to foretell this truly unique birth centuries before it occurred but also because of the profound meaning of Immanuel. Matthew tells us Immanuel means "God with us." God loves us and wants to be with us and provide life for us even though we don't deserve it.

To understand God's plan, it is important to realize that Jesus was not born of sin or indiscretion but in a special once in eternity act of the Holy Spirit. As one last emphasis on this important fact, Matthew points out that though Joseph married Mary and took her to

It is not an insignificant detail that the angel addressed Joseph as son of David. Matthew was stating that Joseph was in royal line of David which God had promised the throne of Israel for perpetuity. Christ was the only way this promise could have been kept.

The angel told Joseph the name to give the baby boy that Mary was going to birth. The name was to be Savior (Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua which literally means "Yahweh is salvation.") Matthew explains the importance of this name when he explains: "name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins," Matthew 1:21 [HCSB]. We need salvation from our sins because "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," Romans 6:23 [NIV].

What's so special about Jesus? Jesus is the only way to be saved from our sin. This is the way Jesus explained this in John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," [NIV].

The wise men of old realized that Jesus was very special. They followed the special star from the east to worship the "King of the Jews." When the wise men asked for help in finding the new born King the Jewish scholars knew from Micah 5:2 that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

When the star stopped over the house that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had moved into the wise men went in and found Jesus. When they saw Jesus, they immediately fell on their knees and worshiped Him. They had also brought precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Not only had the wise men been observant enough to see the star that lead them to Jesus' house. When they were warned in a dream of Herod's scheme to hurt Baby Jesus, they were alert enough to understand and accept the message to avoid Herod as they returned home.

This Christmas season, what will you give Jesus the Christ?

Hicks is a member of First Church, Clinton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

"Declaring the Good News"

Luke 2:8-20, 36-38

By Shirley Heap

Christmas is a marvelous time of the year. During the Christmas holidays we have great opportunities to talk about the reason for the season. Our schedules revolve around special services, celebrations with family members, and parties. How much time is spent talking about our Savior's birth? This good news of Jesus birth and the reason for His birth still needs to be announced today.

All the confusion over the word Christmas doesn't upset God. He just asks that His children proclaim Him King.

1. Receive Good News, Luke 2:8-14

Shepherds in the field at

night watching their flock. Such a strange audience for an angel of God to choose for the great announcement. Is there any wonder that there was great fear when the angel appeared? This wasn't a nightly visit for the shepherds. The glory of the Lord shining around them probably had a great calming effect upon these lowly men. Note the first words, "Do not be afraid" in verse 10. Our Lord many times in the scriptures spoke the same words. Receiving this news is so reassuring to each believer, that it leaves no place for fear.

The next great revelation of this study (verse 11) is so meaningful to even me, "A Savior who is the Messiah the Lord was born 'for you.'"



Heap

2. Report Good News, Luke 2:15-18

Think of the first time you heard the Good News. What were your thoughts? At age five, following the death of my mother, I was placed with an aunt whom I had never met. I was totally bewildered and so alone. This aunt told me about Jesus, a Person that would always be with me and take care of me. At age five I grasped this message and clung to it as if my life depended upon it. Until this very day, 65 years later, this Jesus has never let me down. The love for my Lord compels me to keep

reporting this same message to others who are fearful or alone.

The shepherds heard the news and said, "Let's go see for ourselves!" and then proclaimed it to others.

This was not a second hand message. They saw for themselves. Only those who respond positively to the Savior can truly share the message. May we be available for the task? "Joy to the World, the Lord is come!"

3. Praise God for Good News, Luke 2:19-20

One could never imagine the joy Mary felt as she cradled her Son. The Holy Spirit, using the word "treasured," in verse 19 speaks volumes. Treasure, defined, is a possession of great value, possibly giving up one's life for it. What unspeakable praise Mary must have had. Yet the shepherds were glorifying and praising God for they had seen the Messiah with their own eyes. "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

4. Thank God for Good News, Luke 2:36-38

When Anna, a widow, who had served many years in the temple saw the Christ Child, great joy and thanksgiving filled her heart and soul. A long awaited promise had been fulfilled in her lifetime and she could not be silent. How much more grateful should we, as believers, be today? All Christ has done for us through His birth, death, and resurrection is only the beginning. The Holy Spirit has been sent, as promised, to help us daily. "He will never leave us nor forsake us." (Heb. 13:56). "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise!" (Psalm 100:4).

Let's not forget the lesson title, "Declaring the Good News" as we celebrate. "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth" (Psalm 100:1).

Heap is a member of Calvary Church, Waynesboro.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Work Matters

Genesis 1:26-28,31; 2:15; Psalm 127:2;
Proverbs 6:6-8; 21:5; Colossians 3:22-4:1

By Don Hicks

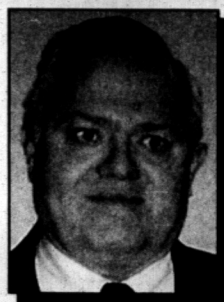
"The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it," Genesis 2:15 [HCSB]. Watching over the garden was Adam's work, and that was given him before sin entered history. Adam's job as supervisor of the garden was part of what God called good in Genesis 1:31.

Looking closer at that first chapter of Genesis causes us to notice that ruling over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature is at least part of what God meant when He said man was made in His image. Also, part of God's image is explained in verses 27 and 28 — "So God created man in his own image, in the image

of God he created him; male and female he created them, God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it,'" Genesis 1:27-28 [NIV].

God's image includes both being fruitful and subduing the earth. And all these things are explained and in place when God says everything is good and before the entry of sin into human existence. Work and family are part of the natural and divine order of God's good creation.

When we read the expanded explanation of creation in Genesis 2:15 and following for the rest of the chapter, we find that it was not good for Adam to do this by himself. He needed "a helper suitable



Hicks

and his helper companion were to carry out God's command to "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish...the birds...and every living creature."

Work is a central part of a person's life, and sharing that central part of life with one's God given companion (spouse) is a good thing. One of the purposes of work is to provide for your companion and the rest of your family. Paul told Timothy that "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever," 1 Timothy 5:8 [NIV].

for him." None of the beasts of the field or birds of the air were found suitable to work with Adam in subduing the earth. For Adam to fulfill God's purpose in work he needed what The Message paraphrase calls "a helper, a companion."

In one part of our focal passage, we find Paul saying that we should work as though we are doing it for the Lord himself. Colossian 3:23 and 24 in the HCSB reads: "Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord — you serve the Lord Christ."

Proverbs gives a simple lesson from nature to explain how we are to approach work. Solomon said "Go to the ant ... observe its ways and become wise." When this careful observer of God's creation watches the ant what does he find?

1. The ant gathers its food during the harvest.
2. The ant works and prepares its provisions all summer.
3. The ant is self motivated and does not need a leader, administrator, or ruler to do its God given work.

Solomon also said in Proverbs 21:5 "The plans of the diligent certainly lead to profit, but anyone who is

reckless only becomes poor," [HCSB]. We are to plan to do our work and provide for ourselves and our family and do it as unto the Lord, but we are not to let work take over our lives to the exclusion to the rest of God's plan for us. God will provide for us. The second verse of the 127th Psalm reminds us "In vain you get up early and stay up late, eating food earned by hard work; certainly He gives sleep to the one He loves." Certainly when you read this psalm you realize the "He" that loves is God and "the one He loves" is you.

Next week we will study the related passages from Luke 12. They say in part "Consider how the wildflowers grow: they don't labor ... Yet not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these ... But seek His kingdom, and these things will be provided for you."

Hicks is a member of First Church, Clinton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Live in Worship

Romans 12:1-8

By Shirley Heap

What is worship? Is it a programmed meeting with God, or a ritual we perform to get God's attention? No. We are so blessed that God would even allow us to worship Him. Worship is to adore, to bow to, and to serve with devotion. Worship in a believer's life should be as easy as breathing. We have the Spirit of God indwelling in us. All during our day we should be ready to offer praise or thanksgiving to His Name. Can you remember your baby calling your name for the first time? Did a warm fuzzy feeling of pride come over you? Our Heavenly Father has much the same joy when His child speaks to Him. The attitude of praise and thanksgiving will automatically spill over into all

areas of our life if we practice it regularly.

1. Worship: Present Yourself, Romans 12:1

Dedicating ourselves to God's service is one way we worship God. Paul begs believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice. God doesn't ask us to die for Him (even though our love for Him should make us willing to) but he asks us to live for him. Paul helps us understand this better in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." When I think of my body as the temple of Holy Spirit, my mind, soul, and spirit scream, WOW!



Heap

Living a "holy, acceptable" life unto God is the most reasonable thing a Christian can do. It is not a command. It is a request. The KJV uses the phrase "reasonable service." The HCSB translates the same verse, "your spiritual worship." We

worship in spirit and in service. Paul is asking Christians to present their bodies to God. We do live in the world and we do have physical bodies. Paul tells us that by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice, we are pleasing to God.

Our prayer is that worship of God becomes a way of life for all His children.

2. Worship: Renew Your Mind, Romans 12:2-3

As children of God we need to be on guard against blending into the world system. When we conform to the world we become similar to and adapt to the culture around us. Can those

around us tell we are Christians without us telling them? Paul asks that we be transformed, or changed. As a beautiful butterfly emerges from an ugly cocoon, so should our lives change as we allow Christ to renew our minds. How does this happen? Philippians 4:7-8 has a complete outline for transforming the mind. We should be able, as Paul says in Phil. 4:9 for others to follow our example and "the God of peace shall be with them." Another scripture of great value in renewing our mind is Matt. 6:33, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."

Paul continues, "So that we may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." What more can we ask? God has bestowed all good gifts upon us that we might use them wisely in His service.

3. Worship: Use Your Gifts, Romans 12:4-8

Just as our human bodies are so masterfully designed

with different parts to work together, our spiritual life is made in such a way as to fit perfectly with His plan.

God, in His grace, has given each believer a gift or gifts of the Spirit. We so often hear Christians say, "I just don't have any gifts." It is easy to confuse natural talents such as music, art, or even teaching with spiritual gifts. Any believer who feels this way should read the list of gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:7-12 and in Romans 12: 6-8. Our God-given gifts are given in order that we worship and glorify Him. Discovering and using our spiritual gift(s) for His honor and glory is one of the highest forms of worship. The church is the Bride of Christ and He is so pleased when He sees her working in harmony to serve Him. Proclaiming, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy (this is not a comprehensive list) used in the church so it can function as God intended.

Heap is a member of Calvary Church, Waynesboro.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.

Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to crop-

ping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Bibliocipher

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FCL KIPOP PFGL, G FX:
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YE XFC PGMMGCN YC
MSI ZGNSM SFCL YE
DYTIZ, FCL AYXGCN GC
MSI ABYOLP YE SIFWIC.

XFZV EYOZMIIC: PGUMR-

MTY

Clue: R = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Three: Sixteen.

STAFF CHANGES

Grace Church, Richland, has called Duncan Tucker as youth minister and minister of music. Tucker is a graduate of William Carey College and has attended New Orleans Seminary working toward a master's degree. He and his family live in Brandon.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. RAs and GAs, North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton

1. The RAs and GAs of **North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton**, recently held a bake sale to raise money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, raising a total of \$168. Shown are the participants.
2. **Briar Hill Church, Florence**, is hosting a New Year's Eve Gospel singing Dec. 31, 7 p.m., featuring New Wine, Strong River Quartet, Gospel Echoes, and The Revelations. A love offering will be taken. For information, call (601) 720-8870 or (601) 906-0677.
3. **New Life Fellowship Church, Oakland**, is hosting a Gospel singing Dec. 31, 7 p.m., featuring Reunion, the Gradys, and Jerry and Spin Smith. Jerry W. Smith, pastor.
4. The Women's Ministry of **First Church, Grenada**, will host their 8th Women's Conference Jan. 20-21. Special guest speaker is Rhea Briscoe; praise and worship leader is Lalanah Vaughn. For information call (662) 226-3661.

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COLLEGE NEWS



1. Scholarship Awarded, WCC

1. **William Carey College** student Corrie Covington, a sophomore English major from Granbury, Tex., was awarded the E. R. Pinson Memorial Scholarship by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board of Ministerial Education. The scholarship, based on recommendations by faculty, was established in 1995 and funded by the Pinson family to continue Dr. Pinson's legacy of ministerial education.

2. The Halbrook Awards for Academic Achievement Among Athletes, established in 1984 by the Mississippi Legislature, recognizes the achievement and maintenance of high academic standards for student athletes at colleges and universities. In the Independent College Division, **Blue Mountain College** received both the David M. Halbrook Award for graduation of the greatest percentage of certified athletes and the John C. and



2. Halbrook Awards, BMC

Ernestine McCall Halbrook Award for the greatest percentage of increase in graduation of athletes. Pictured are (l to r) Coach Bill Dowdy (tennis), Athletic Director Johnnie Armstrong, Coach Jack Moser (basketball).

3. **Blue Mountain College** will offer classes at Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch, beginning in January 2006. President Bettye Rogers Coward commented, "We are excited about partnering with Longview Heights Church to provide Christian education opportunities in Desoto County. Initially, we will offer college credit courses that appeal to individuals in the areas of Biblical Studies and Education. The course offerings will grow over time as we learn what students are interested in taking." For more information about the Desoto County off-site campus, contact the Office of Admissions at (800)235-0136 or www.bmc.edu.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF EDUCATION: First Baptist Church Luling, Louisiana is seeking a full-time Education minister with emphasis in preschoolers/children. Applicants should submit their resumes via email: todd.hallman@alumni.duke.edu or mail their resumes to: FBC Luling, P.O. Box 155, Luling, LA 70070. All resumes due January 15, 2006.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PICAYUNE, MISS., is seeking a full-time children's minister. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 477, Picayune, MS 39466, attn: personnel committee.

SALEM-TROY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is searching for a Director of Missions. Please send resumes or recommendations to search committee, Salem-Troy Baptist Association, 51 County Road 2233, Troy, AL 36079.

PRENTISS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is accepting resumes for Director of Missions position. Please send to search committee, c/o Prentiss Baptist Association, P.O. Box 42, Boonville, MS 38829.